

Support of HB 6664 An Act Managing Waste and Creating a Waste Authority
To: Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee,

I write to you today as the chair of the Sustainable Deep River committee and resident of Deep River to strongly urge you to consider supporting HB 6664.

Our committee has been actively finding ways to reduce waste and clean up our roadsides, river banks and waterways. In partnership with DEEP we have hosted educational programming to clear up confusion about what can be recycled and what cannot. I can attest there is much confusion about what the current plastics labelling means and if the materials in our blue bins even gets recycled! We are working hard to encourage our residents to recycle better and more. On Earth Day we will be hosting a town-wide, volunteer-led litter cleanup and expect we will accumulate large quantities of plastic (nips, discarded water bottles etc). What a shame that volunteers are left to pick up the mess, and municipalities, such as Deep River, are left with the burden of paying for their proper disposal.

Speaking of disposal, it is unbelievable to me that we ship our waste to landfills in PA and OH. Not only do CT citizens pay for plastic packaging, but they pay to dispose of it through tipping fees, and then pay the costs of greenhouse gases emitted by trucking that trash two states away! Other states, *ones that grow our food*, should not be paid to take our trash; we need to take responsibility for it by stopping it at its source.

Our committee has recently started collecting recyclable thin-film plastics at the Deep River town hall, library, and local grocery store where dedicated volunteers then pick up the plastic and drop it off at a grocery store for pick-up by a collector. In the first month we have already collected over 20 pounds of material, filling my SUV several times. It is remarkable how much thin plastic pervades our lives - dry cleaning bags, Amazon mailer pouches, bubble wrap, newspaper bags, produce packing, case wrap (including the plastic that surrounds all the plastic water bottles) and more.

We are fortunate to have dedicated volunteers trying to tackle the problem. We are just one very small town doing its best. Imagine all the plastic waste littered and un-recycled across the state.

Disposable plastic has infiltrated every segment of our lives because it is cheap to make from abundant oil and gas. As the world transitions to renewable energy, the oil industry's plan B is single-use plastics. This point is important, because despite what the Plastic industry claims, they have NO financial interest in recycling or encouraging recycling of plastic because of the availability of cheap virgin plastic. **This must be legislated.**

Perhaps the market for post-consumer recycled content will fix the problem, eventually, **with mandated levels (please keep)**. However, the market created the cheap plastic problem in the first place, and haulers to scoop it up (**who will continue to do so with more effective recycling education, outlined in the bill**).

Deep River is also leading the way in Connecticut with food scrap collection. We just launched an SMM grant funded pilot program. Our transfer station now accepts food scraps separately from trash and recyclables. In the first three weeks of the program we have gone from 4 containers to 11 containers of food scrap waste diverted from the waste stream. This volume will only increase as more citizens adopt the program. Currently the food scraps have to be driven to Southington for processing into compost and energy. Please continue supporting **mandated** food scrap recycling as outlined in this bill. This will incentivize creation of a regional business to properly compost the food scraps, something the Lower Connecticut River Valley, *desperately* needs.

Your committee must legislate on this issue and join four other states, and numerous countries, that already have strong packaging EPR programs. The earlier we enact this legislation, the earlier we will have a true impact on reducing greenhouse gases, educate more residents to properly recycle, and can pioneer a consumer culture of reduced waste that will ripple across the United States.

Thank you for your consideration, Sara Conner (Deep River, CT)